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## Multiple nominal expressions in Garrwa conversation

Ilana Mushin

University of Queensland

Noun phrases have long been a contested category in studies of Australian language grammars. In this chapter I use a corpus of conversations in the Northern Australian language Garrwa to show how the syntactic and prosodic design of referring expressions consisting of a demonstrative nominal and a common nominal is highly sensitive to the place in and relevance to the unfolding interactional sequence in which the referring expression occurs. In particular, I show that the design of referential nominal expressions in Garrwa conversations display a systematic relationship between more phrase-like constructions and smooth, progressive talk, and less phrase-like formulations and sequential and topical boundaries.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper I explore the deployment of nominals in conversation in the Australian Aboriginal language Garrwa, focusing on the design of turns which feature multiple coreferential nominal expressions. Nominals, together with pronouns (which behave differently grammatically), constitute the resources Garrwa speakers have at their disposal to establish and maintain reference in talk. Here I show that while features associated with phrasehood such as congruent case marking and contiguity can be identified in the grammar of Garrwa, their distribution in conversation reveals a more elaborated picture of how the syntactic and prosodic design of coreferential nominal expressions may service the ongoing trajectory of talk-in-interaction.

In many languages, multiple coreferential referring expressions, for example, a demonstrative and a common noun (eg. ‘that hat’), must occur contiguously and in a fixed order, typically within a turn construction unit (TCU) (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). As shown here, Garrwa coreferential demonstratives and nominals need not occur contiguously, nor need they occur in the same prosodic

domain. This pattern has led Louagie and Verstraete (2016) to classify Garrwa as having noun phrases as a ‘minor’ constituent type, alternating with multiple nominal expressions in an appositional relationship.

Here I examine how the syntactic and prosodic properties of Garrwa referring expressions consisting of a demonstrative and a common nominal reflect the interactional contingencies of the turn in which they occur. In particular, I show that more phrase-like formulations are associated with smooth progression of courses of action, while less phrase-like turn designs are associated with less smooth progression, such as topic initiation, closure and resumption, repair and reformulation. The discourse occurrence of non-pronominal noun phrases has long been associated with newness, contrast and topic junctures (e.g. Fox 1987; Givón 1983), contrasting with pronouns and zero anaphora for continuing topicality. Here I show that these kinds of associations also play out in the design of multiple nominal expressions.

The analysis presented here is thus consistent with an interactional linguistic approach that understands grammar as emergent from routine practices of linguistic behaviour, that in turn reflect what is happening in “their home environment in co-present interaction” (Schegloff 1996, cited in Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018: 3).

### 1.1 Noun phrases in Australian languages

The question of noun phrases as a constituent category has long been debated among scholars of Australian languages, especially those concerned with the non-configurational properties of Australian language grammars (e.g. Hale 1983; Nordlinger 2014; Pensalfini 2004). Australian languages tend to lack traditional grammatical hallmarks of noun phrasehood, such as contiguity and restricted ordering. Additionally, most Australian languages lack a class of determiners altogether, relying on demonstratives to delimit reference and mark definiteness. Concordant case is often marked on all coreferential nominals within a clause. In such languages, coreferential nominals have been argued to occur in appositional rather than hierarchical relationships (e.g. Blake 1983).

A clear example of this comes from Kalkatungu, a Pama-Nyungan language from Western Queensland (Blake 1979). The example in (1) shows that the coreferential nominals *cipa* ‘this’, *thuku* ‘dog’ and *yaun* ‘big’ can occur in a number of orders and need not occur contiguously (Blake 1983: 45) (see Appendix for glossing conventions). Blake (1983) argues that the ergative marking on all three nominals is assigned directly from the verb semantics.

- (1) Kalkatungu (Blake 1983: 45)
- a. *cipa-yi thuku-yu yaun-tu yanyi icayi*  
 this-ERG dog-ERG big-ERG white.man bite  
 'This big dog bit/bites the white man.'
  - b. *cipa-yi thuku-yu yanyi icayi yaun-tu*
  - c. *thuku-yu cipa-yi icayi yanyi yaun-tu*
  - d. *yaun-tu cipa-yi thuku-yu icayi yanyi*
  - e. *cipa-yi icayi yanyi thuku-yu yaun-tu*
  - f. *yanyi icayi cipa-yi thuku-yu yaun-tu*

It has long been acknowledged, however, that not all languages display this degree of flexibility in word order and contiguity, and that for some languages a single case marker can have scope over more than one contiguous coreferential nominal expression, suggesting that such expressions form a phrasal constituent.

Recently Louagie and Verstraete (2016) surveyed 100 Australian Aboriginal languages to explore the degree to which individual Australian languages displayed features of noun phrasehood. They used four criteria – word order flexibility, locus of case marking, prosody and the presence of ‘diagnostic slots’ – to classify the status of noun phrasehood. Of the 100 languages they surveyed, 16 appeared to have a clear phrasal category headed by a nominal, 28 lacked evidence for a noun phrase as a constituent category, and 49 displayed optional properties of phrasehood.<sup>1</sup> From this Louagie and Verstraete (2016: 49) concluded, “NP constituency is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon: some languages have it as the dominant way to organize the nominal domain, while others have it as an option available in a few circumstances” They then point out that discontinuous nominal constructions of the kind illustrated in (1) (b), (c) and (e) above, are “generally less frequent than contiguous structures, and they have specific functions, often in the domain of information structure” (Louagie & Verstraete 2016: 50, but see also McGregor 1997 and Schulze-Berndt & Simard 2012). They conclude with the suggestion that,

languages should really be typologized in terms of the range of nominal constructions they have available, and the division of labour between them, rather than on the basis of a simple yes-or-no answer to the question of constituency or (dis)continuity. (Louagie & Verstraete 2016: 55)

The descriptive facts, and Louagie and Verstraete’s conclusion, thus suggest that for a substantial number of Australian languages the question of noun phrasehood

1. Most of the data that served as the input to Louagie and Verstraete (2016) came from published grammars and text collections. They were therefore constrained by what information on each of the four criteria were available. For example, there was information on prosody for only 19 languages.



is closely tied to the interactional contexts in which nominal expressions appear phrasal. For example, they may appear phrasal because they consist of contiguous nominal words occurring in a particular ordering pattern, but this may be a design feature of that particular turn, rather than a structural property of the grammar of that language. The question for these languages is therefore not whether noun phrase ‘exists’ as a constituent category, but rather, what are the interactional contingencies that lead people to articulate a nominal reference that is contiguous, fixed in its order, and uttered within the same prosodic unit.

In Louagie & Verstraete’s (2016: 48) typology, the Northern Australian language Garrwa is classified as one of the 49 languages in which nouns appear in both phrase-like and non-phrase-like configuration. It is therefore an appropriate language through which to explore the contexts in which speakers design their referential expressions as phrasal constructions, and the contexts in which they do not. In the next section, I provide a grammatical background for Garrwa, and show how coreferential nominal expressions align with the four criteria used in Louagie and Verstraete’s (2016) study. I then present a detailed analysis of the most frequent coreferential nominal construction in the corpus – combinations of demonstrative and a common nominal – showing how their occurrence and prosodic shape are contingent on their role in the emerging talk in conversation. The results demonstrate how the design of referring expressions relates to what is being done in the turn in which they appear, and raises questions for the efficacy of a notion ‘noun phrase’ for understanding linguistic structures in use in real situations.

## 2. Garrwa

Garrwa is spoken in the southwest corner of what is known as ‘Gulf’ country in Northern Australia, around the town of Borroloola near the southwestern corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria (see Figure 1). Its precise classification within the Australian language family is contested, with Blake (1990) and Evans (2005) classifying it as non-Pama-Nyungan (Garrwan family) while Harvey (2009) argues it is more likely a Pama-Nyungan language. At this time of writing Garrwa is a highly endangered language with only a few fluent speakers remaining. Almost all of the speakers I recorded for this study are now deceased. Younger people speak some Garrwa or have Garrwa vocabulary as part of the creole language that they now speak (called Kriol). Most Garrwa conversations, including those used in this study, involve considerable switching between Garrwa and Kriol (and sometimes English) (Mushin 2010).

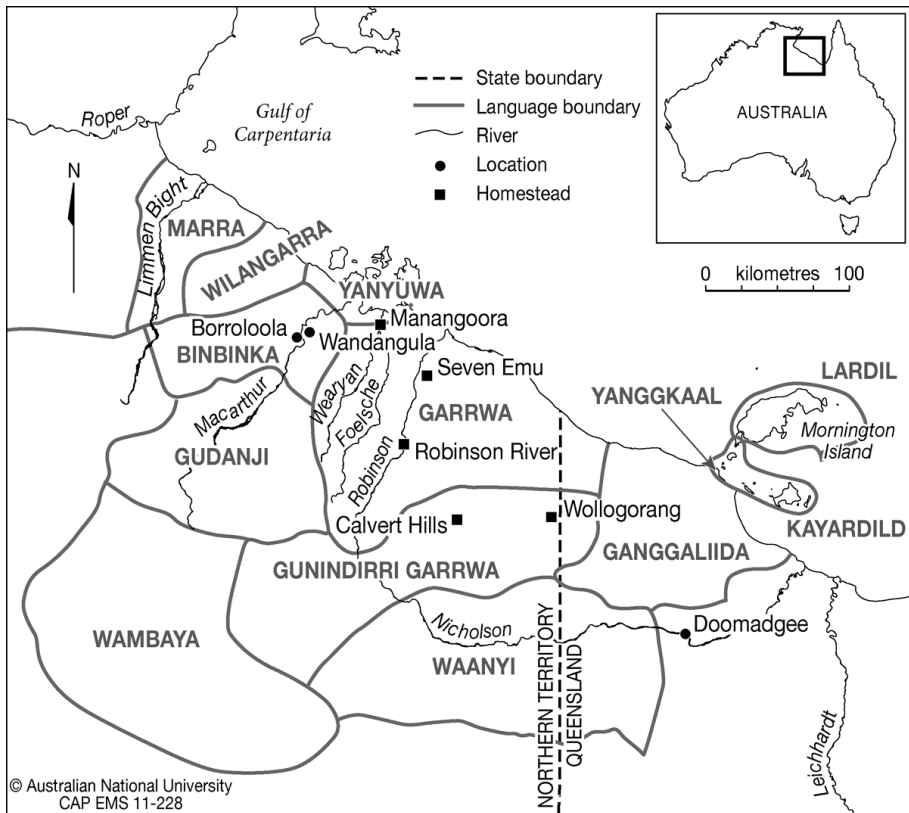


Figure 1. Garrwa and surrounding languages (from Mushin 2012: xviii)

## 2.1 Grammatical features of Garrwa

Like many other Australian languages, Garrwa has a rich inventory of agglutinating morphology for indicating case relations. However grammatical categories typically associated with verb morphology (e.g. tense, aspect, mood) and person/number marking of arguments are found in a clitic cluster that must occur in second position in a clause (Mushin 2006, 2012; Simpson & Mushin 2008).

A sentence in Garrwa consists minimally of a core consisting of the second position clitic cluster (2P) preceded by an initial element (1P). This is represented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** The core of Garrwa sentences. Nom = nominative, Acc = accusative, TAclitic = tense/aspect clitic

1P (Initial position) (one of the following)	2P (Second position)
i. Verb	(Modal clitics) – {Nom and/or Acc pronoun
ii. Interrogative word	} – (TAclitic)
iii. Negative particle <i>miku</i>	
iv. Clause-connecting <i>ngala</i>	
v. (Nominals)	

The following two examples present clauses consisting of just the core: an initial verb followed by a second position subject pronoun (in (2)) and an initial verb followed in second position by a habitual clitic =*yili* and a reflexive pronoun (in (3)).<sup>2</sup> Both (2) and (3) are grammatically complete.

- (2)

*kijijba*  
tie.up  
1P (initial position)

*yalu*  
3PLNOM  
2P (second position)

They were tied up

(3.9.03.1.KS)
- (3)

*wadamba=yili*  
feed=HAB  
1P=2P

*nurru-ngka*  
1PLExclNOM-REFL  
2P

We would feed ourselves,

(4.5.01.1.TD)

As illustrated in Table 1, nominals can occur in core-initial position under certain pragmatic conditions (Mushin 2012; Simpson & Mushin 2008), as illustrated in (4), where the name of the language occurs in initial position. Note that when a verb is not in initial position, it occurs in the immediate post-core position.

- (4)

*Garrwa nurri*  
Garrwa  
1P

*1PLExclNOM*  
talk  
2P

*yanyba*  
this-LOC  
POST-CORE

*na-nyina*  
this-LOC  
POST-CORE

‘We’re talking Garrwa here’

(080620.KS: 422)

Clausal constructions must minimally include a core, but may also include nominals referring to core argument referents, location and temporal adjuncts and clause connectors. The canonical ordering of these elements in simple sentences is represented in the template in Figure 2:

2. Both pronouns and tense/aspect markers could be represented as cliticised to the initial position in the core with the ‘=’ symbol. However, Garrwa orthography presents pronouns as separate words and I have kept that convention in analytic work using Garrwa language.

(adjunct/clause connector) – **core** <sub>{consisting of: initial and second positions}</sub> – (core argument nominal group) – (adjuncts)

**Figure 2.** Canonical word order in Garrwa simple sentences

Nominals are most frequently found either in immediate post-core position, or following the verb in post-core position). They can also occur in core-initial position, and in a pre-core slot. Pre-core positions are offset prosodically (see Mushin 2018 for further discussion on the prosody of initial and pre-core positions). Elements in post-core position may or may not be prosodically integrated with the core.

## 2.2 Garrwa nominal words

As described in Mushin (2012: 44ff), Garrwa nominals fall into a number of formal subclasses, mostly based on shared case allomorphy and derivational suffixes. Subtypes include demonstratives (5), common nouns (5), adjectival nouns (6), kinship nouns (7), and location words (8). These are in boldface below.

- (5) **nana-ma** barri ja=ngayu ngajaka jala **waydbala na-nkanyi**  
 that-IDENT DM FUT=1SGNOM ask REL white.man that-DAT  
 ‘That one, I’m going to ask (the) white man for that (one).’ (080620.DG:940)
- (6) Ngala mada **kunyan**=kiya, wudumba (na), nanga-ngi junu  
 but also good=OBLIG get 3SG-DAT perhaps  
 ‘But (she) also wants to get a good one for her.’ (080620.KS:915)
- (7) wajawaja yanyb=i nani **bankanya** winyurru  
 quick talk=HORT like.this cousin soon  
 ‘Quick, let’s talk to cousin soon’ (080620.KS:857)
- (8) Kinyba=yi ngali **wayka mundarr-ina**  
 be.bogged=PAST 1duExclNOM down sand-LOC  
 ‘We two were bogged down (there) in the sand’ (080620.DG:655)

All nominal subtypes can occur individually or severally in utterances to delimit reference. There is no morphological difference between forms in canonical head positions (as in Examples (5)–(8) above) and forms in modifier positions. For example, in (5) above, the demonstrative *na(na)nkanyi* ‘that-DAT’ occurs as a nominal referring to a vehicle and follows a nominal *waydbala* ‘white man’ which is not coreferential. In (9) below, the same demonstrative form occurs preceding the nominal *wadybalanyi* ‘white man-DAT’. Although in both examples, the demonstrative is contingent with the common noun, the case concordance in (9) between these forms indicates their coreferentiality.

- (9) *najba=kiyi yaji nana-nkanyi waydbala-nyi*  
 See=IMP thing that-DAT white.man-DAT  
 Look at that white man's things. (080620.KS:456)

Mushin (2012: 255) avoids the term noun phrase for multiple coreferential nominal expressions, defining a nominal group as “a set of nominal forms that refer to the same referent and that share the same grammatical and semantic role”, similar to that of Blake's (1983) analysis of Kalkatungu nominals in multiple nominal expressions occurring in an appositional rather than hierarchical relationships. However, Louagie and Verstraete's (2016) four tests for noun phrasehood – word order flexibility, locus of case marking, prosody and diagnostic slots – show that the syntax of Garrwa nominal groups is constrained in ways that do suggest a constituent category. The properties of Garrwa with respect to these tests are as follows:

a. Word order flexibility

While all orders of coreferential nominals are theoretically possible, in actual discourse demonstrative nominals and possessive pronouns tend to precede all nominals, and adjectival nominals tend to precede common nominals. Example (10) illustrates this this ordering tendency.

- (10) *baki jala ngayu yanyba=yi, nana-ma yingka mudinyi*  
 and REL 1SGNOM say=PAST that-IDENT other PSEUD  
 PreC PreC PRE-CORE 1P=2P Nominal expression  
 ‘And then I said to that other one...’ (030910.ER:273)

b. Locus of Case marking

Like many other Australian languages, case morphology occurs on all coreferential nominal words, as in (11), where the ergative case marker occurs on the possessive pronoun, kinship nominal and proper name.

- (11) *wajba=yili ngaki-nkurri-nyi mami-yurru-nyi, (1.2) Wakudi-wanyi*  
 give=HAB 1SGDAT-DEC-ERG Mother-DEC-ERG name-ERG  
 1P=2P POST-CORE  
 My mother used to give it, Wakudi. (030904KS:1171)

c. Prosody

Nominal words can together constitute their own prosodic unit and be integrated into the larger (clausal) unit, but they don't have to be. In Example (10) earlier, all three contiguous nominal words occur within the same independent prosodic unit (marked by a comma in the orthography), while in (11) the first two contiguous nominal words form part of the prosodic unit with the core, while the third nominal occurs after a 1.2 second pause and forms its own prosodic unit.

## d. Diagnostic Slot

As described in the previous subsection, the presence of a second position clitic cluster enables the initial position in the clausal core to be identified. While core-initial position is most frequently a single word, coreferential nominals may also occur in this position, as in (12) where the adjectival and common nominals occur in core-initial position, followed by the clitic cluster (future plus pronoun).

- (12) *Walkurra-nyi mudika-wanyi ja=nganyi. wijkunumba*  
 big-ERG car-ERG FUT=2SG-DAT take.back  
 1P 1P 2P PoC1  
*dere karrurri*  
 east.place  
 PoC2  
 ‘A big car will take you back to the east place.’ (080620.DG:674)

These recurrent properties of multiple coreferential nominals – that they tend to occur contiguously within the same prosodic unit with preferred orders, and that they can occur in the core-initial position – led Louagie and Verstraete (2016) to classify Garrwa as a language in which multiple nominal expressions may behave as phrases in some instances, but may also be in appositional relationships in other instances.

This classification implies that when Garrwa speakers represent referents with more than one nominal word, they can choose to structure this set of words more or less as a single constituent, both prosodically and syntactically.<sup>3</sup>

What are the kinds of contingencies that result in complex nominal expressions designed as single constructions? In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider this question through an analysis of combinations of demonstratives and common nominals in a corpus of Garrwa conversations.

### 3. Analysis of multiple nominal expressions in Garrwa conversations: Demonstratives and common nominals

#### 3.1 Data for this paper

The six conversations that form the basis of this analysis were recorded between 2003 and 2008. Most of the participants are elderly Garrwa women who were working with me on a language documentation project. Most recordings were

3. Case morphology occurs on all coreferential nominal words and so cannot be used as a test for constituency.

made during breaks in language documentation work, where I had left the vicinity. Four conversations were audio recorded only, while the two longest were also videorecorded. The recordings last from 3 minutes to about 90 minutes, with approximately an hour of talk transcribed altogether using Conversation Analytic transcription conventions (Hepburn & Bolden 2017).

The transcribed conversations cover a number of topics and include a variety of actions sequences including complaints, planning, here and now observations, requests, and narratives. In one conversation (030904), the recording includes a lengthy narrative that is being delivered for the purposes of the recording (remiscences of how people used to gather food in the olden days). This narrative is punctuated by all sorts of interruptions and other action sequences.

There were 87 instances where a referent was referred to using a multiple nominal expression, and these form the basis of the resulting analysis presented here. While theoretically any combination of coreferential nominals is possible, by far the most frequent combination in the conversational corpus was a demonstrative followed by a common nominal: nearly two thirds of multiple nominal expressions were a demonstrative + nominal with no prosodic break between them. The demonstrative was typically less prosodically prominent than the following nominal and the distal absolutive demonstrative *nanda* ‘that (one)’ was also often phonologically reduced in this arrangement to *nan*. In most examples the demonstrative + nominal combination was found in immediate post-core position, prosodically integrated with the core. This is illustrated in (13) and (14) below.

- (13) *jakajba=yi nanda mudika*  
 start.up=PAST that car  
 1P=2P POST-CORE  
 ‘The car started up.’ (030908.ER:155)

- (14) *yanka ja=nga wajba ngana na-nkanyi kulabajarra-nyi*  
 when FUT=1SGACC give 1SGACC that-DAT hat-DAT  
 1P=2P PoC1 PoC2 PoC3  
 ‘when are (you) going to give me that hat?’ (080620.DG:191)

There is, therefore, evidence of both prosodic and syntactic integration of demonstrative + nominal as a unit of talk, as well as evidence of syntactic integration with the larger clausal unit. This kind of integration is evidence that demonstrative + nominal forms a linguistic construction that, like other constructions, allows delivery of these references as planned rather than incrementally built.

However, there were also examples of demonstrative + nominal that were either not prosodically integrated with the rest of the clause (i.e. with the core), or they did not themselves form a prosodic unit. Examples (15) and (16) illustrate

this situation. In (15) there is a prosodic break, represented with a comma, between the demonstrative *nanama* ‘that one (identifiable)’ and the following nominal *kulabajarra* ‘hat’. In this example the demonstrative forms a prosodic unit with the preceding question word *wanya* ‘what’. In (16) the demonstrative *nayi* ‘this’ and the coreferential nominal *kulabajarra* ‘hat’ are separated by a discourse particle *barri*<sup>4</sup> and a prosodic boundary.

- (15) *wanya nanama, kulabajarra*  
 what that-IDENT hat  
 ‘What’s that one, hat?’ (080620.DG:184)
- (16) *kaja nurri-nya wajba=yi, mm, baki nayi barri, kulabajarra*  
 many 1PLExcl-ACC give=PAST and this.one DM hat  
 ‘She gave lots of them to us. And this one, hat.’ (080620.KS:240)

On prosodic and syntactic grounds the turn design in Examples (15) and (16) presents the demonstrative and common nominal combination incrementally rather than as a ‘planned’ construction – as independent coreferential words rather than as a syntactic construction, as illustrated in (13) and (14).

The Examples (14), (15) and (16) all come from the same videorecorded conversation where the referent under discussion, a woollen hat, is present. The hat in question is an object that is available to be visible and manipulated during this part of the conversation. In the part of the conversation where (14), (15) and (16) are uttered, we might wonder why the noun *kulabajarra* ‘hat’ is used as all, since the referent is visible to both participants, and after its first mention, is established in the discourse. A demonstrative or pronominal or other deictic (including gestural) referring strategy might be expected under these conditions.

In the next subsection I present a detailed analysis of the part of the conversation in which this hat is made relevant and discussed as an illustration of the interactional factors that impact the design of referring expressions as phrasal constructions or otherwise.

### 3.2 Extract analysis – *kulabajarra* ‘hat’

The conversation from which this Extract (17) has been selected took place in the school office of the small community of Robinson River during a break in doing language documentation work with the two main participants, Kate and Daphne. I had set up a video camera and audio recorder to record ordinary conversation

4. The precise function of *barri* has yet to be established. Mushin (2012) analysed it as occurring after information that is to be understood as established in prior discourse. It frequently, but not exclusively, occurs following demonstratives.



while I went to the shops to get drinks for the women. During this time, other people (off camera) enter the office, some to interact with Kate and Daphne. Figure 3 is taken from midway in the extract and shows Kate on the left, Daphne on the right, and the woollen hat being handled by Daphne. Kate is looking in the direction of the door to outside of the office.



Figure 3. Kate, Daphne and *kulabajarra* 'hat'

At the start of this part of the recording, Kate is recruiting a boy who is a relative of hers to buy some clothes from a visiting clothes seller. In order to get her wallet out of her backpack to give the boy some money, Kate picks it up from the floor and rummages in it to locate her wallet. As she does so she partially pulls out a woollen hat and then replaces it in the bag.

The first eight lines of the transcript are not related to Kate's ongoing action of retrieving the wallet. At line 9 however Daphne, sitting opposite Kate and in line of sight, asks something in overlap which could be a turn inquiring what Kate has (a 'what do you have?' type of question). This is redone in the clear in line 10 with *Wanya nanama*, *kulabajarra* 'What's that one, hat?'. The word *wanya* in Garrwa can mean 'what' or 'who' – questioning the referent as a person or object. Daphne could be asking whose is the hat (if she had not seen it before), or be asking something about the hat's significance. The hat is a new referent and one being made topical in this turn by Daphne. The form of the demonstrative *nanama* signals that the referent in question is identifiable to both Kate and Daphne, in this case something visible to the both of them.

(17)

- 1 (3.3)  
 2 DG: Ye:h;>bardibardi.<  
           old.woman  
           Yes, old woman  
 3 (0.8)  
 4 KS: (Lookim dey[                   ]).  
 5 DG: [Yanka barri yanka.  
           how DM how  
           Where? Where?  
 6 (1.7)  
 7 DG: >Yanka ja=nungka jilajba.  
           how FUT=1duInclNOM walk  
           Where are we going?  
 8 ? : [Ee †ga:wn nah,                   ]  
           3SG gone now  
           He/she's gone now

- 9 DG: -> [(wanya ninji wanya)]  
           What/who2SGNOM what/who  
 10 -> =†wanya nanama; [†kulabajarra]  
           what/who that-IDENT hat  
           What/who that one, hat?



Daphne's first referring strategy to identify the hat is to use a demonstrative form (*nanama*) which draws attention to a copresent object about which Daphne is asking. The prosody of the turn suggests an incremental composition rather than the production of a demonstrative + nominal construction. Daphne continues in the same turn to identify *kulabajarra* 'hat' in a new TCU. The extension of this turn may be because while she has used a demonstrative form that signals

that something is identifiable to the both of them, there are a number of possible confounding referents (e.g., the backpack). By explicitly using the nominal *kulabajarra* 'hat', Daphne has designed her turn to maximise Kate's recognition of the referent as the hat she is holding. Daphne's main agenda here appears to be to establish the hat as a topic of talk where Kate has clearly not intended it to be so, as Kate is engaged with finding money for the boy.

Daphne's question does not immediately get a response from Kate because Kate is engaged in a course of action with another participant. She places the hat back in the backpack and addresses the boy. During this part of the talk, Daphne's arms are on the table in front of her and she is making 'give me' gestures with both hands, as if to be requesting the hat.

At line 16 Daphne makes this request more explicit in a turn also designed as a question, but here explicitly about giving Daphne the hat 'when are you going to give me that hat?'. The hat is no longer visible to Daphne at this point as it is in the backpack, and here the reference to the hat is done with a demonstrative + nominal construction (*nan-kanyi kulabajarr-anyi*). Both nominal words have a dative case suffix, *-(k)(a)nyi*, which is the appropriate case for the role of the transferred object in a construction with the verb *wajba* 'give' (the recipient takes accusative case). The demonstrative and noun are in the canonical position for nominal arguments (immediate post-core position) and are integrated as a unit prosodically. They are further integrated with the larger clausal structure that includes first and second positions. The reference to the hat, done with the demonstrative + nominal construction, thus appears integral to the design of the whole turn as a request for the hat.

- 11 ? : [Got in troub]le.  
 12 (0.8)  
 13 DG: [Yanka-  
       when-  
 14 KS: [↑(ny') BUYIMba; ↓ja=ninga jila-(jkini)  
           buy FUT=2SGACC/1SGNOM walk-  
 15 [(jiwana)  
       (jiwana)  
       I'm going to go and buy for you ( )

- 16 DG: -> [>Yanka ja=nga wajba ngana nan-kanyi  
 when FUT=1SGACC give 1SGACC that-DAT  
 17 kula:bajarr-anyi. 'mum'.  
 hat-DAT  
*When are you going to give me that hat, mum?*



- 18 (1.7)  
 19 DG: Ga' warijijin.  
 Got ( )  
 20 (1.6)  
 21 DG: (Kukudi), (0.5) °\*mudinyin (barri).°  
 (FaMo) deceased DM  
*That (granny) who has passed away*  
 22 (3.4)  
 23 DG: >Ngarri?<  
*Isn't it?*

The use of a demonstrative + nominal designed as a construction achieves at least two things here: the representation of the hat as something already established as an object under discussion (done with the demonstrative part of the construction), and the representation of the hat as integrated in the already established proposed course of action – Kate giving something to Daphne that she has requested. Although already mentioned in a prior turn, the hat has not yet been acknowledged by Kate as topical, and this may account for the use of an explicit mention of the hat in Daphne's turn. Unlike the initial mention of the hat in line 10, this turn presents the referring expression as a demonstrative + nominal construction. This formulation is suited to this particular turn because the hat has been established already as a referent for Daphne, even if it has not been acknowledged by Kate. The 'core business' of Daphne's turn is not to make the hat topical, which





At line 37 Kate, switching to English, identifies the hat with a woman, Isabel. This is possibly an answer to Daphne's original question concerning the hat in line 10 (*wanya nanda kulabajarra* – 'What's/Who's that hat?'), perhaps identifying Isabel as the person who gave Kate the hat.

Now that the hat has been acknowledged by both participants as the topical referent, and Kate has accomplished the appropriate second pair parts to Daphne's request (line 16) and question (line 10) by handing her the hat and identifying who gave it to her, the explicit nominal referring expression *kulabajarra* is no longer mentioned. Daphne uses a Kriol pronoun *ee* '3rd person singular' in line 39 as she says the hat reminds her of women from Tennant Creek (where it is colder and these hats are common). Kate follows with an account of where and when she wears it. Reference to the hat is done linguistically by a pronoun (line 39), a demonstrative *nanda* 'that one' only (line 43) and finally no reference, seeming to follow the pattern for referent tracking established in Givón (1983) that continuing reference gets less and less linguistic material.

Note however that while the word *kulabajarra* 'hat' is not used in line 43 to identify the referent, it is referred to gesturally as Kate gives a head point towards the hat in overlap with the clausal core *wirrimba ngayu* 'I wear (it)'. The demonstrative *nanda* 'that' occurs immediately following the head point and in a new TCU, followed by the particle *barri*, and is prosodically prominent. The design of this turn thus presents the linguistic referring expression – the demonstrative – as incrementally added following a gestural reference, rather than prosodically and syntactically integrated with the rest of the clausal unit.

The design of the referring expression in line 43 is thus more prominent than appears from the use of linguistic forms alone as it includes both gesture and



prosodic means of focusing in on the hat as referent. One possible account for this increased prominence may be that Daphne's prior turn had raised something that could form the basis of a new topic (women of Tennant Creek). Kate's turn in line 43 is designed to affirm the hat as the continuing topic of talk by pointing to it, and making the demonstrative reference more prominent prosodically (and possibly with the use of the particle *barri*). Now that the hat has been reasserted as the ongoing topic, Kate downgrades her referring strategy in line 47 as Kate with a much smaller head point in overlap with the clausal core *kuluka ngayi* 'I slept (with it)' and complete omission of linguistic reference. Kate's turns in both 43 and 47 add more information about the hat – she wears it in cold weather and she wears it when she is 'out bush'.

After Daphne and Kate share locations where the hat might have been worn (Alice Springs and Western Australia), Kate reiterates that Isabel gave her the hat in line 55 (*wajba barri ngana* '(She) gave (it) to me'). Daphne's repair initiation in line 57 (*wanyangini ninya wajbaya* 'Who gave (it) to you?') is because she has failed to recognize who the hat-giver is. That is, while neither Isabel nor the hat are mentioned explicitly in line 55, it is only the identity of the hat-giver that is problematic for Daphne. This is evidence that the hat has remained topical, while Isabel, although mentioned earlier, has not.

- 35 Boy: (Can                    ).  
 36 (2.6)  
 37 KS: -> **That's: (.)↑Isa↓bel:..**  
 38 (1.9)  
 39 DG: -> **↑Ee remind me da buh-**  
           It reminds me of (that ol-)  
           ((Daphne picks up hat, turns inside towards head))  
 40 (1.5)  
           ((Daphne puts hat inside down on table))  
 41 DG: **All da'        bardidibardi; la ↑Tennant- Cree:k.**  
           All those old women        at Tennant    Creek  
           ((Daphne puts hat on head))



- 42 (1.2)
- 43 KS: -> [↑w̥irrimba ngayu], nanda barri; (.) kulwajana  
 wear 1SGNOM that DM cold.season  
 [((Kate head points at the hat))]  
*I wear (it), that one, in the cold season*
- 44 (0.5)
- 45 DG: Yin̥d̥i:??  
 Really?
- 46 (0.5)
- 47 KS: -> [Kuluka ngayi], ↑jidi munjimunji:  
 sleep 1SGNOM=PAST with bush  
*I slept with (it in the) bush*  
 [((Kate headpoints at the hat))]
- 48 (1.7)
- 49 DG: Kularra; yali jilaj'; wabula kula..  
 south 3PLNOM=PAST walk long.time south  
*That place in the south (Alice Springs), they went south a long time ago,*
- 50 (2.4)
- 51 KS: Bayungu ngayu; jilajbayi:\*; Wes'ern Australia;  
 west 1SGNOM walk=PAST  
*West, I went to Western Australia,*
- 52 KS: -> ↓wirrimbayi↓; ↑I don' kno̥w;↑  
 wear=PAST  
*wore (it), whatever.*
- 53 (0.5)
- 54 DG: Yin̥d̥i[i::?  
 Really?
- 55 KS: -> [Wa:j:↑ba (ba)rri ↓ngana-hh  
 give DM 1SGACC  
*(She) gave (it) to me*



- 56 (0.9)  
 57 DG:-> >Wanyi-ngini ninya wajba=yi.<  
           who-ERG       2SGACC give=PAST  
           Who gave (it) to you?  
 58 (1.3)  
 59 KS: Wany:marri-wanyi; I:Isabel-uh  
          white.woman-ERG  
          (The) white woman, Isabel (did)  
 60 (0.2)  
 61 DG: ↑A:h ↓ye:h yeh yeh.  
          Ah yeh yeh yeh  
 62 (1.0)  
 63 DG: Ngarri-ku\*↑nah?  
          Ngarri-Q  
          (Did she) really?  
          ((Daphne takes the hat off her head))

At line 64, Kate continues talking about Isabel by mentioning that she gave lots of hats to people. At this point she is no longer talking about the particular woollen hat that initiated this conversation topic. As Kate utters her turn in line 64, Daphne places the hat on the table in front of Kate and lets it go. Kate then picks up the hat and looks at it as she utters line 66 *baki nayi barri*, \**kulabajarra* ‘and this one, hat’. This turn has both a demonstrative and a nominal reference to the hat. The demonstrative is proximal, consistent with the hat being held by Kate in her own hands. The presence of the particle *barri* between the demonstrative and the coreferential nominal and the prosodic break between *barri* and *kulabajarra* ‘hat’ are both evidence of a turn in which the demonstrative and the coreferential nominal are not being presented as a construction. The use of an overt nominal as part of Kate’s referring strategy is itself interesting, as although Kate’s prior turn had been about lots of hats and not that particular hat, the particular hat has been a recent topic of talk, has remained visible to both participants throughout this extract, and at this time of Kate’s turn is being looked at and handled by Kate.

The turn in line 66 is uttered at a point at which Kate shifts from referring to many hats that Isabel gave out, to refocusing on the particular hat that she is holding, the hat that had been the primary topic of conversation until very recently. The full mention of the hat individuates the hat while also moving towards topic closure (cf. Fox 1987). Evidence of topic closure is seen in the subsequent turns in which Kate self-repairs her misspeaking of the word *kulabajarra* (as \**kulabajarra*) and Daphne repeats the repair, elongating its production, and the topic is closed.<sup>5</sup>

5. The topic does indeed close at this point. During the 4.2 second gap in line 70, Kate and Daphne disengage with each other and look out the window. The next turn concerns the people they can see out the window and the hat is never mentioned again in this conversation.

The separation of the demonstrative and the common nominal both syntactically and prosodically is consistent with the analysis of this turn as serving to refocus the topic back to the hat after a short hiatus, rather than as a continuing referent (what Fox 1987 called a return pop).

- 64 KS:     **Kajan**   **nurri-nya**   **wajba=ˈyiʔmm:mhɿ**  
              many   1PLExcl-ACC   give=PAST  
              (She) gave lots to us  
              ((Daphne puts the hat on the table and Kate picks  
              it up and looks at it))  
 65         (1.7)

- 66 KS: -> >**Baki** ↑**nayi** **barri**; **kulayja**↑**barr\*an**.  
              and   this DM       hat  
              And this one, hat

((Kate positions the hat to be placed on her head  
 and then she puts it on her head))  
 (4.2)

- 67 KS:     **KULAbajarra~h**.  
              Hat  
 68         (2.8)  
 69 DG:     **KULAbalja:rra**,  
              Hat  
 70         (4.2)

#### 4. Conclusion

The patterns of nominal distribution in Garrwa conversation allow us to make some important observations concerning the status of phrasal constituency in an interactional grammar framework, and the interactional contingencies that appear to influence the prosodic and syntactic shape of multiple nominal expressions. In this sense, the utterance of multiple nominal expressions as an integrated construction, or as a series of incrementally composed, appositionally related referring expressions is a dynamic feature of turn design, rather than a reflection of abstracted constituent structure.

The observations from the Garrwa conversations, exemplified here with the *kulabajarra* Extract (17), indicate that while truly smooth topical talk in theory precludes the need for explicit referring, much of talk is not so smooth and these are precisely the contexts where more elaborated linguistic (and gestural) expression emerges. Fox (1987) found correspondences between full noun phrases (which could be single or multiple nominal expressions) and topic and sequence

boundaries; anaphors (pronouns and ellipsis) and subsequent and continuing reference within topics and sequences.<sup>6</sup>

The Garrwa *kulabajarra* Extract (17) shows that problems with recognition, progressivity of action sequences, and management of topicality *additionally* impact the design of referring expressions within turns, to favour the use not only of explicit common nominal words (full NPs), but also the presentation of that nominal word in a separate prosodic unit from a coreferential demonstrative nominal.

The Garrwa data also show that overall the packaging of referring expressions as a demonstrative + nominal construction appears where referring is not the ‘core business’ of the turn, but rather done in service of a smooth progression of an interactional sequence – a focus on the action being accomplished in the turn, rather than the setting up of a new topic or sequence. The integrated design of these turns iconically reflects the fact that the explicit reference, while enabling recognition where it has not yet been mutually established, is simply in service of a more primary action (e.g., a request, as in line 16 of (17)). Currently the only formal difference between Garrwa demonstrative nominals in single or multiple nominal expressions is that absolutive distal demonstratives may be, but are not always, reduced (i.e. *nanda* > *nan*). We can see in this behavior, however, the ways in which new forms of demonstratives found in these integrated positions may become systematic ‘modifier’ forms of demonstratives.

The Garrwa conversational data thus supports Louagie & Verstraete’s (2016: 48) classification of Garrwa as a language in which noun phrases are a minor category, but provides some usage-based evidence for what it means to be a minor category. Recall that Louagie and Verstraete (2016) found that about half of the Australian languages in their 100 language survey, including Garrwa, showed variability in whether multiple nominal expressions displayed phrase-like (or construction-like) properties or not. Given that only 19 languages of this survey included information about prosody, it is possible that prosodic variability of the kind I have shown for Garrwa here is more prevalent than was reflected in that study, and this could result in a significant rethinking of this typology.

As Louagie and Verstraete (2016) point out, information structuring principles have usually been cited as explanations for so-called ‘discontinuous noun phrases’ in Australian languages. Here I have shown that the status of information as given, new, contrastive, etc., can only partially account for the ways that speakers formulate their turns, and that the design of referring expressions as constructional or otherwise, continuous or discontinuous, is systematically tied to the point in

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6. Givón (1983) and Chafe (1994), make similar claims about the contrast between topic initiating full NPs and the use of pronouns and ellipsis in continuing reference, but their data was not largely conversational.

an action sequence in which it is placed. Thus it can be seen that the design of a referring expression displays whether that action sequence is beginning, continuing or ending, progressing smoothly or in need of repair, and whether the relative topicality of the referent in question is displayed as mutually acknowledged.

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## Appendix. Abbreviations

1P	1st position in core	IMP	imperative
2P	2nd position in core	LOC	locative
ACC	accusative	NOM	nominative
DAT	dative	OBLIG	obligation
DEC	deceased	PoC	post-core
DM	discourse marker	Pl	plural
Du	dual	PreC	pre-core
ERG	Ergative	PSEUD	Pseud
Excl	exclusive	Q	question particle

FUT	future	REFL	reflexive
HAB	habitual	REL	relative
HORT	hortative	Sg	singular
IDENT	identifiable		

